

OGDEN, UTAH, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1915.

# NOT PATRONIZING BUT REALLY HELPING THE WORKING GIRL

**This Is the New Viewpoint of Fashionable Society Women Who Are Providing Clubs or Homes Where the Wage-Earning Maiden May Board for \$3.50 Per Week—Old Ideas Dating Back to Famous Remark of a Queen of France Are Fast Disappearing.**

At last the great gulf that has separated wealthy society women from poor working girls has been bridged, and it has been done by the society women in many parts of the country hitting upon the most practical idea ever thought up—that of establishing in many of the big cities, clubs for working girls, with board at \$3.50 a week.

For years the working girl has been the concern of wealthy women. Some took up her condition as a fad and others as a serious study, but none ever accomplished any definite results other than incurring the enmity of the working girl.

Now, however, the society women are establishing clubs at the various cities and the working girls and women actually are patronizing them. Board at \$3.50 a week with room and all conveniences of home included were the factors that won the girls' hearts.

Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Miss Jane Addams, Misses Blanche and Ethel Bass and Mrs. Filay Shepherd, formerly Helen Gould, are among the many society women and girls and social workers who have interested themselves in these clubs and have made successes of them.

The sympathy between wealthy women and working girls perhaps dates back to the founding of large department stores and the many agitations to have buyers do their Christmas shopping early so as to relieve the poor shop girl from tedious hours of standing on her feet in the closing hours before the great holiday.

## FIRST IT WAS A FAD.

The matter, however, was first taken up as a fad. A New York society woman in her search for some new form of diversion actually found that girls who stand on their feet from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m., actually get tired, that their feet are blistered and that most of their leisure time is spent under the doctor's care.

Whereupon the society woman gave a dinner in the girls' honor and invited all of her social clan to ex-

claim with her in the presence of the sad-eyed working girl, "poor thing, isn't it too bad?" The girl, of course, felt as much encouraged as did the poor of Paris when Queen Marie Antoinette on being informed that the women and children were without bread exclaimed: "The poor things. Why don't they eat cake?"

The French had no cake to eat. Nor did the New York working girl profit by the exclamation of her rich patrons.

The working girl returned to the daily grind with a hatred of rich people in general and society women in particular.

The society women of that day had the wrong idea. They did not know that they were complicating rather than solving the affairs of the working girls by bringing them into wealthy surroundings giving them a costly meal and on their departure pressing into the girls' hand a bill. It only made the workers more dissatisfied with their work and inspired them to a desire to be like the wealthy women who didn't have to work for a living and yet possessed plenty.

More than one girl's head was turned wrong right here in New York from this mistake of the wealthy women who wanted to aid, yet didn't know just how to do it.

## IDEAS ARE CHANGED.

"The poor ye have always with ye" and the working girl is poor or else she would not be working. Yet social workers made the same mistakes in trying to deal with working girls as they did in trying to aid the poor. In many cities are organized charitable associations supported by annual donations of wealthy citizens, and on the whole supposed to treat charitable cases in such way as to solve the conditions of the impoverished families.

Yet that is just what they have failed to do—solve the problem. In many big cities the charitable association gives the family enough food and fuel to last three days. Then it is through with them. If complaint



is made the charitable association shows its records to prove that it already has rendered efficient aid—given three days food to last a family two weeks.

The thing in this case is that the well-paid workers of the charitable society failed to relieve the family. If the head of the house were out of work the conditions would be solved if employment were obtained for him. If the family was too old to work it were best that the members be sent to some home for the aged.

So as these associations failed to aid the poor because they failed to solve their conditions so did the society women and other social workers fail to solve the working girl's condition by offering her sympathy and money.

The chasm that separates the rich and the poor, the working girl and the society woman must ever remain. It will but harm the girl to bring her into an atmosphere of wealth and after an hour or two of gaiety send her back to her cheerless room.

## PRACTICAL PLAN.

What was necessary was that the condition of the working girl be

changed. The girls employed in shops and stores at present are generally of the better class and but few of them are from the slums. But a girl making \$5 a week must seek cheap lodging and cheap lodging can only be found in cheap neighborhoods. Result—Girls of refinement living in cheap neighborhoods, with bad surroundings, are often subjected to the insults of rough men living in that same neighborhood.

Of course it was out of the question to live in a respectable neighborhood, for there room and board can be obtained for never less than \$5 a week and this would consume the entire earnings of the working girl.

So finally some brilliant rich woman discovered the seat of the trouble. It wasn't that the working girls needed sympathy or glimpses of wealth. It was she needed a decent home.

In every city there is some neighborhood, formerly occupied by wealthy families, that still maintains its respectability. In such neighborhoods houses may be rented cheaply and expenses so adjusted that a home or club where girls may room and board for \$3.50 per week can be conducted so as to pay expenses.

So in New York, Chicago, St. Louis and other cities such clubs have been established. The rooms are comfortably fitted and two girls assigned to a room, each having her

own dresser or wardrobe in which to place her clothing. Meals are served twice a day—breakfast and supper. On Sunday the girls may sleep as late as they wish and then prepare their own breakfast upon awakening. In each such home are two parlors where the girls may gather at night and amuse themselves together.

## MAY ENTERTAIN FRIENDS.

The girls are permitted to entertain men friends until 10:30 o'clock. The only restriction is that the men must depart at the given hour and also that the girls introduce them to their chaperons, each home having an elderly and refined woman in charge as sort of a mentor for the girls.

In one home in particular the trustees of the club were so liberal as to establish trysting places about the large grounds. Benches were arranged beneath trees and rose bushes and if there were anything lacking to make the scene romantic it was the softened rays of the moon. Wise trustees arranged those trysting places. They realized that the ultimate solution of the working girl's problem is marriage. So they arranged that only gentlemanly and substantial young men call at the house.

They were eminently successful, for all of the girls in their club married successfully and more were taken in and prepared for the greater work of their lives—for the wed-



DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH AND MRS. O. H. P. BELMONT



MRS. HELEN GOULD SHEPARD

ding that would free them from the bonds of poverty.

Among those who have engaged extensively in the work of aiding the department store girls are Misses Blanche and Ruth Bass, two girls who came to New York from St. Louis and went right into the slums and started to work aiding the girls and in finding them good homes in more respectable places about the city and especially in private homes. While Miss Blanche Bass was unable at first to succeed in establishing a club for the girls she made arrangements to have them taken into private homes where they would be given a motherly care and yet where the board and room would not cost over \$3.50 a week.

## IN PRIVATE HOMES.

She found that even in New York there are motherly women who will care for working girls and give them kindly attention for the sum that barely pays the expenses for their upkeep.

The idea spread rapidly and from it was derived that of establishing clubs in various cities. Many motherly women were found who gladly took the position of mentor in a club

for a small consideration and her room and board.

It was decided that the girls be given an opportunity for self-government and formulate their own rules, the house-mother, as she is called, being present only as a confidant of the girls and not as a superintendent or a disciplinarian. And the girls took right to their new mothers, the majority of the club girls being orphans.

All their little secrets were poured into the ears of the house-mother and she succeeded in giving them good advice.

So the chasm between the working girl and the wealthy woman was bridged by a practical solution of the problem and the scheme has been so successful that many other clubs are being planned in the large cities.

The sponsors have found that the homes cost little—in fact are practically self-supporting, while the refining influence on the girls is great, and another thing—it brings the girls in touch with the better class of working young men and results in advantageous marriages that solve the question of the working girl.